

'Stop teasing,' Simonson tells women

Judge notes support, scoffs at recall

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Of The Capital Times Staff

County Judge Archie Simonson said this morning he has been getting calls of support from all over the country as a result of national press coverage of his views on rape and sexual permissiveness.

He said the response "reinforces" his opinions and contended that a re-

call petition drive "only has two chances — slim and none."

"Women's activist groups concerned about rape should follow the old saying that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. I'm trying to say to women, 'Stop teasing.' There should be a restoration of modesty in dress, and the elimination from the community of the sexual gratification businesses.

"Whether the women like it or not, they are sex objects."

Simonson said "the favorable responses (to his comments) far outweigh the negative. A lot of support has been coming from church people, ministers and the like."

Meanwhile, community outrage from many quarters is building.

Simonson, who indicated in statements Wednesday that he feels rape can be a "normal reaction" to a sexually permissive society, faces an organized recall drive being organized by several women's groups.

The Legal Association of Women, a group of attorneys, is planning to garner lawyer support for a statement censuring Simonson.

And County Supervisor Larry Tobin, Town of Madison, will introduce a resolution at next Thursday's County Board meeting reprimanding Simonson for what Tobin calls "an irresponsible and inexcusable failure to administer justice."

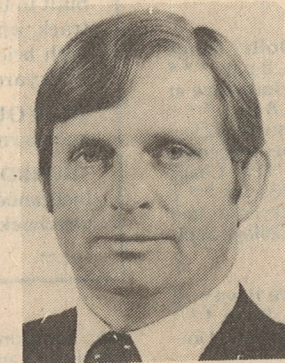
Both NBC and CBS picked up the story on their national network newscasts Thursday night. The Asso-

ciated Press and United Press International are carrying lengthy accounts on their national wires today.

Simonson's comments came during a hearing for a 15-year-old boy who pleaded guilty to second degree sexual assault on a girl at West High School last fall. The judge decided to allow the youth to remain at home for a year under court supervision.

About 60 persons demonstrated outside the City-County Building Thursday, and several representatives of the protestors met with Simonson, where he generally repeated his views about a sexually permissive society and the sexual provocations with which women supposedly tempt men. Simonson rejected a request to resign, and talk of a recall began immediately afterward.

A meeting has been called for next Thursday at 7 p.m. at A Room of One's Own bookstore, 317 W. Johnson St., to start the recall drive. Organizers include the Madison chapter of National Organization for Women (NOW), the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and the Rape Crisis Center.



Archie Simonson

Tobin's resolution will be introduced in the wake of City Council action Tuesday night on a similar measure that Mayor Paul Soglin says he will introduce.

"Rape is a most despicable act of violence against another human being and cannot be tolerated by this or any other society," Tobin declared, accusing Simonson of demonstrating "an insensitive and insulting attitude toward women, and a gross neglect of the

community that he is elected to protect."

Tobin said the moral climate of Madison and Dane County "can hardly be expected to improve when Judge Simonson fails to even offer a wrist slap for a crime as vile as rape. How much more permissive can you get than to offer no punishment for a crime?"

State Rep. Jonathan Barry (D-Mt. Horeb) noted that Wisconsin's revised sexual assault law defines rape as a crime of violence against another person and does not mention morality, clothing style or community attitudes.

The women who met with Simonson Thursday morning also pointed this out to him — but Simonson said he disagreed with the Legislature on this. "Rape could be either a crime of violence or of lust," he said.

Jane Pearlmutter of the Dane County Project on Rape said this attitude is an erroneous and outdated one that in the past has prevented women from reporting rapes to the authorities. "There was a feeling that they (the victim) would be blamed for the crime by friends and family and the criminal justice system," she said.

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Simonson

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"We've spent three years working to change this."

The victim in the West High rape case was wearing tennis shoes, blue jeans, and a blouse over a turtleneck sweater at the time of the attack.

News media, public officials and women's groups report receiving a barrage of telephone calls from angry citizens.

One they can do before the recall petition gets off the ground, according to Pearlmutter, is to write letters of protest to Simonson and the newspapers.

William Lunney, executive administrative director of state courts, told a group of women Thursday that a recall petition has never been effectively used against a judge in Wisconsin, nor has the alternative method of impeachment by the Legislature.

But some women's representatives today expressed confidence that they will be able to obtain the required 21,000 petition signatures needed for a recall election.